



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3028662-EG

Address: 104 12th Avenue

Applicant: Steve Fischer, NK Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Board Members Present: Andrew Haas (Chair)
Betsy Anderson
AJ Taaca
Alastair Townsend

Board Members Absent: Melissa Alexander

SDCI Staff Present: Lindsay King

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial
(NC3P-65, C2-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-65
(South) NC3-65
(East) NC3-65/C2-65
(West) NC3P-65

Lot Area: Approximately 47,447 sq. ft.

Current Development:

The lot proposed for development includes four parcels containing existing commercial buildings and a surface parking lot.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The subject site is located east side of 12th Avenue between E Fir Street to the north and E Yesler Way to the south. The subject lot is split zoned Neighborhood Commercial with a Pedestrian Overlay (NC3P-65) and Commercial (C2-65). Lots to the north are zoned NC3P-65, to the south NC3-65, to the west NC3P-65 and C2-65. The subject site is bound by 12th Avenue along the west property line. 12th Avenue is a major commercial corridor running north south and is a designated pedestrian street containing a bike lane. A new mixed-use building, Anthem, and a variety of single family homes converted to multifamily uses are located across the street. E Yesler Way is a major arterial street running east west and is the south boundary of the site. E Yesler contains designated biking facilities and includes the First Hill Street Car. Bailey Gatzert Elementary School is located directly south of the subject site across E Yesler Way. E Fir Street, a quieter street, is located to the north of the subject site. The immediate context includes a variety of commercial and residential uses. Directly east of the subject lot is the existing King County Archives Building, which is anticipated to be redeveloped with future Seattle Housing Authority housing. The site contains approximately 20 feet of grade change from the southeast corner, the low point of the site, to the northwest corner, the high point of the site.

Access:

The corner site has street frontage on 12th Avenue, E Yesler Way and E Fir Street. Existing vehicular access is from E. Fir St.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance application for a 6-story, 289-unit apartment building with general retail sales and service and 11 Live-Work Units. Parking for 230 vehicles proposed. Existing buildings to be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 25, 2018

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

Site Context

- Noted the corner of 12th Avenue and E Yesler Way is very important. The corner is a gateway for the Central District, Capitol Hill beyond, the International District, and the introduction to the residential neighborhood.
- Would like to see the existing building context inform the future site development. Noted the scale of existing buildings is smaller than the proposed development. The new building is on the leading edge of a new context.
- Noted the site has a very important relationship to the King County Site. Would like to see the design consider a variety of outcomes for the future site development.
- Expressed concern for the lack of light and air to the interior units. Would like to see a larger setback provided between the proposed structure and the interior property line.
- Noted family-size units and children are needed for the future neighborhood residents.

Massing

- Concerned about the lack defined massing and variety in building scale within the proposed options.
- Noted floor plans do not express a setback at the location of the reveal. Would like to see meaningful building modulation so buildings read as three separate structures and not just a change in material.
- Noted the power lines along 12th Avenue inform the massing choices. Concerned that the upper level setback may create a clunky appearance but felt the preferred massing was the most successful option.

Street Level

- Would like to see commercial uses step up grade. Concerned regarding the sunken plaza. Support a departure for retail height if building was located at grade.
- Expressed concern for the proposed live work uses. Would like to see an entire second floor living space and not just a mezzanine. Would prefer to see family size residential units on E Yesler Way.
- Would like a wider sidewalk provided.
- Would like to see future discussion about location of setbacks at ground level.
- Noted E Yesler Way has the best sun exposure, would like to see retail along the street.

The Design Review Chair also summarized design related comments received in writing prior to the meeting:

- Would like to see a massing alternative with multiple buildings.
- Suggested using lasting, timeless materials, like brick and wood, instead of cheap siding or aluminum.

- Recommended including retail incubation for independent retailers.
- Encouraged including tall trees.
- SDOT supports access from Fir, not Yelser by way of woonerf. SDOT would like to see the building designed to activate any future woonerf.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design. Concerns with off-street parking, traffic and construction impacts are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and are not part of this review.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

1. **Massing.** The Board discussed the massing options at length and was concerned with the subtle variation between the options. The Board also noted that the Early Design Guidance packet lacked a meaningful analysis of the existing architectural and building context. Ultimately the Board agreed that the preferred Massing Option 4 provided the better design solution for the site. Option 4 included a step along 12th Avenue to follow grade. The alternative also included two reveals along 12th Avenue and one reveal along E Yelser Way to further break up the massing.
 - a) The Board noted the importance of the corner at 12th Avenue and E Yelser Way and provided guidance that the corner be developed as a gateway. The ground level commercial space should feel substantial and not compressed. **(CS2-C1, CS3-A, PL3-A, DC4-A)**
 - b) The Board provided guidance that the massing should include a more substantive setback at the reveal to physically define the break in the massing. **(CS2-C3, DC2-A)**
 - c) The Board was concerned regarding the back of the building, facing the future King County site development. The Board would like to see how the building will relate to a future SHA development and how it would relate to development without a woonerf. The Board was particularly concerned that both the ground level and the upper levels be developed in anticipation of the future adjacent development. Additional setbacks for the units should be explored. **(PL3-B)**
2. **Architectural Concept.** The Board expressed concern that the preferred massing option lacked a clear design concept. The Board noted that Option 2, the Distinctive Frontage, was more successful because the architecture acknowledged the movement along 12th Avenue. The Board provided guidance that the preferred massing option be developed with a clear

architectural concept and a distinctive character informed by the existing neighborhood urban design context. The concept the Board provided the following guidance regarding the façade composition:

- a) Develop the architectural concept to define a sense of place that bridges multiple adjacent neighborhoods. Design massing gestures, setbacks, and materiality to respond to the existing urban design context. **(CS3-A2, DC2, DC4-A, DC4-D)**
 - b) Consider how the architecture translates across the principle building massing, divided by the reveals. Consider more subtle variations in architecture, material application, use of fenestration and/or architectural detailing. The overall composition should be cohesive. Avoid too distinctive a treatment that will be glaring and unauthentic. **(CS2-C3, CS3-A2, DC2, DC4-A)**
 - c) The Board supported the precedent impacts provided on page 24 of the EDG packet. Specifically, the Board noted the use of wood, the variation in balcony depth, screening elements, and the solid vs. transparent façade treatment as particularly successful. **(CS3-A2, DC2, DC4-A)**
- 3. Streetscape.** The Board expressed support for the vehicle access off of E Fir Street but observed that the ground level design lacked a specific response to the character of each abutting street. The Board noted that the ground level design required additional changes in order to provide a successful relationship between the structure and the street.
- a) The Board did not support the sunken retail courtyard along 12th Avenue. The Board felt strongly that the retail spaces should be located at sidewalk grade and step with the sloping site topography. **(CS1-C, PL1-A2, PL3-C, DC1-A)**
 - b) The Board expressed early support for retail uses along E Yesler given the prominent sun exposure. **(PL1-A2, PL3-C, DC1-A)**
 - c) The Board noted it was very important to anchor both corners with retail uses (12th Avenue/Fir Street and 12th Avenue and E Yesler Way). **(CS2-C1, PL3-A, PL3-C, DC1-A)**
 - d) The Board expressed supported the early landscape design including a regular street tree species rhythm and planting beds with moments of reprieve. **(CS2-C3, DC4-D)**
 - e) The Board noted that the success of live work unit depends upon the interior design, including a ground level work space with a dedicated live loft space. The Board gave guidance that the design should include either a true live work design, or ground level residential units. The Board requested further details for the ground level landscape design to respond to either a live work or residential use. **(PL3-A, PL3-B, DC1-A)**

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance Meeting no departures were requested.

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy: Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

PL3-B-4. Interaction: Provide opportunities for interaction among residents and neighbors.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.